

VZCZCXRO2914
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHCV #0468 0942106
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 032106Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0900
INFO RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000468

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2018
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: CLANDESTINE AIRFIELD DESTROYED

Classified By: Robert Downes, Political Counselor,
for Reason 1.4(d).

1. (SBU) The Bolivarian News Agency announced on March 28 the start of Operation Boquete I, an Army effort to destroy all clandestine airstrips in Venezuela. By March 30 the Venezuelan Army claimed to have destroyed 67 of an estimated 157 dirt runways in the south-western border state of Apure alone. Army Strategic Operations Commander Jesus Gonzalez Gonzalez said that this would be "a frontal assault with every possible resource." Gonzalez added that 19 aircraft and 600 personnel were dedicated to the project.

2. (C) Comment: The bombing of dirt airstrips makes for good television but ineffective counter-narcotics policy. A rented road grader can scrape out a new runway on Venezuela's vast plains in two hours. There is also no indication that they are targeting airstrips actually used by drug traffickers. End Comment.

DUDDY